



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

MIKE D. McDANIEL, Ph.D.
SECRETARY

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Contact: Jean Kelly
Telephone: 225.219.3966

Governor proclaims May as Air Quality Awareness Month

BATON ROUGE – Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco has declared May as Air Quality Awareness Month in Louisiana. May is traditionally the start of ozone season and the proclamation was made to encourage citizens to become familiar with the Air Quality Index and to understand the causes of poor air quality.

Louisiana is in attainment for all national air standards except for one five-parish nonattainment area, which is designated marginal for the eight-hour standard. East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Iberville and Livingston parishes fail to meet the national air quality standards for ozone.

“We are taking the necessary steps to make sure all of Louisiana meets the federal air quality standard,” said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. “DEQ is continuing its effort to reach attainment standards for ozone through the use of monitoring, new technology, education and cooperation with industry, community groups, media and citizens in the Baton Rouge area.”

When conditions are right, the air pollutant known as ozone is formed. Ozone is a prime ingredient in smog and is detrimental to air quality. It is formed by a chemical reaction on hot days when the pollutants, known as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, cook under a hot sun. It’s most prevalent between May 1 and Sept. 30.

When everyone takes necessary steps to limit the formation of ozone-causing pollutants, there is a chance the ozone threat may pass. Some steps the public can take include: carpooling, using mass transit and ride sharing, using gasoline powered engines, such as lawn equipment, after 6 p.m., limit driving and combining errands, conserving energy and fueling after 6p.m.

The Air Quality Index is available on the DEQ web site, www.deq.louisiana.gov. For the air quality forecast call 225.219.0857 and for the AQI hotline call 225.219.3543.